

Ricin



Ricin, the toxin found in castor beans, is poisonous if inhaled, injected, or ingested. It kills cells by inhibiting protein synthesis. Treatment is available, but long-term organ damage in survivors is likely.

Symptoms

Inhalation

Within a few hours of inhaling significant amounts of ricin, the likely symptoms include respiratory distress, fever, cough, nausea, and tightness in the chest. Heavy sweating and fluid building up in the lungs may follow.

Ingestion

A person who ingests a significant amount of ricin would suffer from vomiting and diarrhea that may become bloody. Severe dehydration may result, followed by low blood pressure. Other symptoms may include hallucinations, seizures, and blood in the urine. Within several days, the person's liver, spleen, and kidneys might stop working, resulting in death.

Treatment

A solution of saline and glucose is used to treat ricin poisoning.